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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to obtain information regarding students enrolled in a Medical Terminology correspondence course developed jointly by the Wisconsin Vocational, Technical and Adult Education System and the University of Wisconsin's Extension Division. Specifically, the study sought to gather information about student types and characteristics, students' reasons for enrolling in the course, factors important in choosing a correspondence study course, and the importance of the audio component of the course for student learning. A 25-item survey instrument was administered to 124 students who enrolled in the Medical Terminology course between June 1, 1984 and May 31, 1986. Study findings, based on a 64% response rate, included the following: (1) 56% of the respondents indicated that they had taken the course to satisfy a degree or diploma requirement, 21% enrolled for career advancement, and 20% enrolled to perform present duties better or more easily; (2) the four most important factors related to respondents' choice of a correspondence course were "no conflict with work schedule," "no travel to class," "interested in content," and "preferred to study at home or work rather than at school"; (3) "books and references" were considered the most important means of understanding course content, followed by "teacher," "family and friends," and "other students"; and (4) 37% of the respondents indicated that the audiotape component of the correspondence course was "not important." Based on study findings, a number of recommendations were developed for course improvement. The survey instrument is appended. (EJV)

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE CORRESPONDENCE STUDY COURSE, MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

by

Marvin A. Schrader, Ed.S.

Lakeshore Technical Institute

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A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Author: Schrader, Marvin A.

Title: An Analysis of the Students Enrolled in the Correspondence Study Course, Medical Terminology

Institution: Nova University--Practicum Submitted for Social Factors Seminar

The purposes of this study were to (1) obtain information regarding the types and characteristics of students enrolling in the correspondence study course, Medical Terminology, (2) determine the reasons for students enrolling in the correspondence study course, (3) determine factors important in choosing a correspondence study course, and (4) obtain information regarding the importance of the audio component of the course for student learning. The information was important in serving as the basis for decisions regarding content, instructions, instructor-student contact, level of materials, and promotional efforts. The study involved the 1984-86 enrollees of the joint Wisconsin Vocational, Technical and Adult Education System and University of Wisconsin-Extension Division developed correspondence study course, Medical Terminology.

The 25-item instrument was administered to 124 enrollees. Results indicated no significant difference in the geographic location or in the female to male proportions of enrollees and respondents. They indicated that only "use of books and resources to understand difficult

parts of a course" and "Caucasian" were the only characteristics listed by almost all respondents. The other responses indicated the variation in characteristics of individuals enrolling in the course.

A number of recommendations were developed based on the results of the study. These were as follows: (1) the course continue to be offered to meet the joint mission of preparation for job entry and continuing training, (2) the correspondence study course continue to be offered as an alternative delivery mode, (3) developers pay attention to using format, completeness, directions, sequence, and instructor content appropriate to the varying experience levels, (4) directions and instructional materials be at a level appropriate for enrollees having completed at least some postsecondary courses, (5) develop no additional audiotapes to be included in the developed materials, (6) University of Wisconsin-Extension continue to request and review enrollee feedback, (7) promote the course to minorities, (8) promote the course to secondary school counselors and students, (9) pilot the promotion of the course to selected health related places of employment, and (10) continue to study the personal and study characteristics of enrollees.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES vi

LIST OF FIGURES viii

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION 1

Statement of the Problem 4

Purposes of the Study. 4

Research Questions 5

2. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE. 6

Review of Related Literature 6

Significance 18

3. PROCEDURES 20

Definition of Terms. 20

Limitations of the Study 23

Assumptions of the Study 24

Procedures for Collecting the Data 24

Procedures for Treatment of the Data 26

4. RESULTS. 27

5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS. 44

Discussion and Implications. 44

Recommendations. 63

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 66

Page

APPENDICES

A. Wisconsin VTAE Mission 69

B. Lakeshore VTAE District. 71

C. Enrollments in VTAE-UWEX Correspondence Study Course June 1, 1984, Through May 31, 1986; 120, Medical Terminology. 73

D. Medical Terminology Correspondence Course Survey Instrument 79

E. Sample Cover Letter. 83

F. Sample Follow-Up Card. 85

G. Summary of Responses to Survey Instrument. 85

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Location of Enrollees and Respondents in Correspondence Course, Medical Terminology, During 1984-1986	27
2.	Purposes for Enrolling in the Correspondence Course, Medical Terminology, as Indicated by Respondents	29
3.	Reasons for Enrolling in a Correspondence Course as Indicated by Respondents	30
4.	Importance of Resources in Understanding Difficult Parts of a Course Indicated by Respondents	31
5.	Importance of Audiotape in Learning as Indicated by Respondents	32
6.	Feelings Regarding Number of Audiotapes Included as Indicated by Respondents	33
7.	Indicated Study Preference of Respondents	34
8.	Number of Hours of Employment per Week While Enrolled in Course as Indicated by Respondents	35
9.	School Status of Respondents While Enrolled in Course	36
10.	Sources of Knowledge of Course Existence as Indicated by Respondents	37
11.	Level of Education of Respondents Prior to Enrolling in Correspondence Course	38
12.	Number of Years Elapsed Between Last Course and This Correspondence Course Indicated by Respondents	39
13.	Number of Correspondence Courses Taken by Respondents Prior to This Course	40
14.	Age of Respondents When Enrolled in Course	41

Table | Page

15. Ethnic Background of Respondents. 42

16. Sex of Enrollees and Respondents in Medical Terminology Course. 43

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	Geographic Location Comparison of Enrollees and Respondents	45
2.	Sex Proportion Comparison of Enrollees and of Respondents	47
3.	Purpose for Enrolling in the Correspondence Course.	48
4.	Comparison of Reasons for Enrolling in the Correspondence Course	49
5.	Relative Importance of Various Resources in Understanding Difficult Parts of Course	51
6.	Importance of Audiotape Component	52
7.	Respondents' Indications Regarding the Number of Audiotapes Provided	53
8.	Employment Level of Respondents	54
9.	Enrollment Status and Location of Respondents	55
10.	Sources of Knowledge Regarding Course Availability.	56
11.	Level of Education Prior to Enrollment.	57
12.	Years Since Enrollment in a Previous Course	59
13.	Number of Prior Correspondence Courses Taken.	60
14.	Age of Respondents.	61
15.	Ethnic Background of Respondents.	62

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Wisconsin Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) System was developed to train postsecondary school persons (age 16 and over) for the world of work. This mission is stated in the Wisconsin Statutes (see Appendix A). "The long-term goal of vocational education is to meet the manpower needs of the state and nation. The needs have been construed to mean a sufficient quantity of trained persons for the labor force" (Asche and Vogler, 1980:16). To accomplish this, legislation was passed in 1965 to organize the Wisconsin VTAE System into eighteen districts by 1970, one of which was the Lakeshore Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) District, also known as Lakeshore Technical Institute (LTI) (see Appendix B).

The University of Wisconsin (UW) was one of the universities expanded under the Morrill (Land Grant) Act of 1862. The expansion was primarily through the establishment of agricultural and mechanical colleges within the university. Since then, it has increased the scope of offerings to include course work leading to the baccalaureate, master's, and doctorate degrees in a number of areas. An Extension Division was established to take education to the people, primarily in the areas of agriculture and home economics, because many of the people resided in rural areas, not being in the proximity of campuses.

The Extension Division published many bulletins that provided farmers with the latest recommendations and information regarding crops, animals, farm accounting, etc. Many bulletins were also provided to homemakers regarding home management, gardening, clothing, etc. This was alternative education at work helping to meet the needs of people.

The Extension Division continued to expand its offerings so that by 1970 its offerings also included correspondence study courses at the high school level and general college-type courses. The offerings did not, however, include technical-type occupational courses. These were not considered to be within the mission of the UW System but rather within the mission of the VTAE System, which at that time did not have an alternate delivery system developed.

The need for technical-type occupational courses was becoming apparent as employed persons began requesting technical courses to help them keep up with technological changes. The VTAE System had the needed courses already developed, while the UW System had the correspondence delivery system in place. Administrators of the two systems met and agreed to an experiment to coordinate and cooperate in an effort to offer technical level occupational-type correspondence courses. The VTAE System district staffs were to select the textbooks and resources and develop the course outlines and supplementary student materials. The UW-Extension Division staff members were to provide the format, editorial services, publicity, and instructor services for the course. The first course, Interior Design, was developed by Gateway Technical Institute staff for offering through the UW-Extension Division in 1974.

Enrollments for the correspondence course developed by Gateway Technical Institute staff were sufficient for the decision to be made to offer additional correspondence study courses cooperatively. One of the courses selected to be offered in this way was Medical Terminology. Lakeshore Technical Institute (LTI) administrators volunteered to provide staff members for the development of the course. Eugene Wroble, an LTI staff member, had authored the textbook, Terminology for the Health Professions, published by J. B. Lippincott Company in 1982, which was selected as a basic text for the course. He agreed to develop the correspondence study course materials including a study guide and an audiocassette of selected word pronunciations.

A concern regarding distribution of revenue for each course surfaced. The decision was made that the UW-Extension Division would receive the tuition paid by the student; the VTAE district that sponsored the course development would receive the FTEs resulting from the enrollments. The FTEs would result in state aid based on the FTE formula for the district. Both systems would benefit.

Enrollments in the correspondence study course, Medical Terminology, have steadily increased each year as indicated with enrollments of fifty-four and seventy-five for the years 1984-85 and 1985-86 respectively. Addresses of enrollees indicate they live both in Wisconsin and outside the state as far away as Oregon. This is important to LTI for two reasons. The first is that it provides evidence that the vocational system mission is being carried out by the district through the cooperative offering of correspondence study courses. The second is that state

aid resulting from the course FTEs becomes available to the district to provide for additional correspondence course development and promotion materials, which cost the responsible district between $2,500 and $3,000 per course. Increased enrollments provide increased evidence of fulfilling the mission and increased dollars to develop additional courses or revise existing courses to meet the needs of the students.

Statement of the Problem

The UW-Extension Division and Lakeshore VTAE District staff members did not have information regarding the demographic and learning characteristics of students enrolled in the correspondence course, Medical Terminology; how the students learned of the course; why the students chose the correspondence study course; or their reactions to the audio component for the course. This information was necessary to make decisions regarding course content, format, and promotion in an effort to increase enrollments and better meet the missions of the two systems and the needs of the students.

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were:

1. To obtain information regarding the types and characteristics of students enrolling in the correspondence study course, Medical Terminology.

2. To determine the reasons for students enrolling in the correspondence study course, Medical Terminology.

3. To determine factors important in choosing a correspondence study course.

4. To obtain information regarding the importance of the audio component of the course for student learning and the need to expand the audio component.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What were the demographic and personal characteristics of students enrolled in the correspondence course, Medical Terminology, offered by the UW-Extension Correspondence Division and developed by Lakeshore Technical Institute staff?

2. What was the learning interaction style preference of the students enrolled in the correspondence course, Medical Terminology, offered by the UW-Extension Correspondence Division and developed by Lakeshore Technical Institute staff?

3. What were the reasons why students enrolled in the correspondence course, Medical Terminology?

4. What factors were important in students choosing to enroll in a correspondence course rather than an on-campus course?

5. How did the students become aware that the correspondence study course, Medical Terminology, was being offered by the UW-Extension Division?

6. How important did the students feel the audio component of the course materials was in learning the terms?

CHAPTER 2

Background and Significance

Review of Related Literature

The University of Wisconsin was chartered in 1848. It was expanded after 1862 with Morrill Act (Land Grant College Act) funds for an agricultural college and a manufacturing college. Over the years, the Extension Division evolved to take the information gathered in the agricultural college research to the farmers and homemakers throughout the state of Wisconsin.

The volume of research results and farm and homemaker recommendations increased to such an extent that the Extension Division began to publish materials for distribution in many ways to interested persons throughout the state. The university administration decided to formalize some information for offerings. The correspondence course subdivision was created within the Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin in 1891 (Young, 1984:1) which expanded its offerings beyond agriculture and homemaking. Secondary and postsecondary courses were developed in a format for delivery by correspondence study. The courses were limited to nonoccupationally oriented ones because of the emphasis on preparing students for entry into the university, preparing teachers for state teacher licensing, and enabling students to complete baccalaureate degrees.

Vocational education began in Wisconsin in 1911. At that time, vocational agriculture and homemaking programs were offered. Secondary school programs were expanded to offer evening and other nonsecondary school hour instruction to farmers. In 1965, the Wisconsin legislature passed legislation to create a uniform system of public vocational, technical, and adult education available to all persons over the age of sixteen within the state. The educational offerings were to be financed primarily by local taxes, student tuitions, and state aids. State control and coordination was to be provided by a state vocational, technical, and adult education board. The board was to hire a state director and a staff of educational consultants. Each district was to develop its own basic organizational structure for its administration of educational programs and services. Each district would have its own board of education to oversee the carrying out of its mission.

Each district was to provide education/training through vocational level, technical degree level, and adult-level courses. These courses have been designed primarily for persons in positions below the professional level and are for job entry, upgrading job skills, or retraining for new jobs. In 1970, on-farm training also became a responsibility of the VTAE System.

Over the years, the differences in needs of individuals, particularly for upgrading or retraining, have become greater; and it has become increasingly difficult to offer class-size instruction. Districts have been investigating a number of alternative delivery of instruction methods in an effort to continue meeting the needs of

individuals or groups of fewer than twelve. (Twelve is the minimum number required to offer class-size instruction.) Districts, including LTI, developed the capability to offer instruction using one or more of the following: cable television, instructional television fixed service (ITFS), low power television, and very high frequency (VHF) television. None of the districts had attempted to offer correspondence study courses on its own.

There have been numerous attempts by colleges and universities to bring learning to the home as correspondence study. Many institutions have had a decline in recent high school graduates enrolling and are now looking toward new markets for students for survival and/or to continue offering quality educational programs and services. Because most public postsecondary institutions depend on student tuition and state aids based on student numbers, it is becoming more important to place an emphasis on alternative delivery modes such as correspondence study to increase the number of students.

After reviewing a number of research studies regarding reasons why persons do not enroll in on-campus postsecondary courses, Daughtery (1978:37) concluded that there is an "existence of a large audience of adults with a wide range of educational needs who either cannot or will not enroll in traditional campus-based instructional programs." She then described this group as including "mothers with small children, the elderly, the physically handicapped, people residing in remote rural areas, and men and women busy with full-time jobs." Cross (1980:1) also indicated that "new students are those of any age or circumstances . . .

under prepared to do college work . . . ." She (1980:1) also presents the results of her research in which nontraditional students are described as ". . . older, part-time learners who . . . are usually educationally independent, well motivated, and above average in academics."

Hu (1985:201) provides additional characteristics of the non-traditional students as he writes, ". . . their schedules are busier, and their needs are more diverse than their counterparts a decade ago." Correspondence study courses seem to be attracting these older, non-traditional students as indicated in a recent study conducted for the National Home Study Council (1983:2) in which the average age of the students was found to be twenty-eight years. Holleman (1981:1) also contended that ". . . the purpose of . . . alternative strategies [such as correspondence study] was to encourage the worker-students, older adults, handicapped, and women to engage in higher education opportunities."

Correspondence study by its definition is one mode of delivery of courses that will meet the educational and the occupational needs of the new and nontraditional student markets. Correspondence courses have one unique and distinguishing feature; that being, "the learner is at a distance from the teacher for much, most, or even all of the time during the teaching-learning process" (Carter, 1982:2 and Holmberg, 1980:107).

Although there seems to be a renewed interest in alternative educational delivery modes in an effort to meet the varying needs of the various persons, one of the modes, correspondence course study, has been

in existence for a long time. According to Young (1984:1-2), this type of study was begun in 1856 and has continued ever since. Already by the early 1920s, a study conducted by the Carnegie Foundation found that more than a million students were enrolled in correspondence school (Young, 1984:2). He goes on to propose that correspondence study "is the only formal system of education that enables learners, wherever they are and whatever their condition, to overcome the formidable barriers of space, time, social place, and economic status in the pursuit of learning." Even with the advent of new technologies, Holmberg (1980:108) concludes that "it is worth mentioning that it is still the most important medium in distance study."

Correspondence study courses can be very general in nature, satisfying high school requirements to be used as postsecondary prerequisites or basic postsecondary courses, or they can be very sophisticated, leading to advanced degrees. The general types of courses have been the responsibility of the UW System in Wisconsin, specifically, the Extension Division of that university. Another category of courses, that of vocational/career courses, has begun to be important, although not offered by the UW-Extension prior to 1976. In a report of a study for National Home Study Council (NHSC), Zigerell (1984:14) stated, ". . . data gathered by Lambert for the NHSC in 1983 indicated that most courses have a vocational or career orientation."

People have a variety of career or occupational goals. The correspondence study course was designed to "respond to a wide variety of individual career goals and to address the reality of the rapid and

continuing changes in the world of work" (Greenberg, 1980:57). This is possible because courses are selected by the individual based on the needs of the individual, not on the needs of a group.

Students have selected correspondence study courses for a number of reasons. A composite of the reasons obtained through studies by Carter (1982), Changing Times (1983), Glatter and Wedell (1971), and McIntosh (1976) includes the following:

1. Better than other study forms to facilitate the planning and assessing progress made.
2. Easier to work at your own time and pace.
3. Greater economy of time than going to structured classes.
4. Preference for studying on their own; not with other people.
5. Can be done faster.
6. Normally is less expensive.
7. Can earn while learning.
8. Flexibility in time and schedule.
9. Greater flexibility in choice of selecting goals.
10. Greater personal autonomy.

Each has formed the basis for the choice of a correspondence study course over an on-campus course.

Student characteristics are important to those offering correspondence study courses for several reasons. One is to provide a basis for decisions regarding the content and format of the course development. A second is to provide a basis for decisions regarding the

promotion of the courses. Holmberg (1980:109) concluded from reviewing studies done by Glatter and Flink (1980), Glatter and Wedell (1971), Houle (1980), and McIntosh (1976) that the characteristics of students enrolled in correspondence courses include:

1. Wanting to qualify for promotions or career change [up to 75 percent of responses].
2. Goal-oriente [up to 65 percent of responses].
3. Male [approximately 55 percent of responses].
4. Like working alone rather than in a group.
5. Desire to get into a higher educational institution.
6. Desire to gain respect of peers and society members.
7. Autonomous learner.

The number of persons in the age range of eighteen to twenty-one, according to population projections of the United States Census Bureau, has been declining steadily during the past five years because of declining birth rates. This has been true for both the nation and for the state of Wisconsin. As as result, the enrollments at most post-secondary institutions have been leveling off or declining, some even drastically. Changing Times (1983:6) reported, "Currently the number of home study admissions is growing by 15 percent to 20 percent each year while college enrollments on campus appear to be declining." Young (1984:3) also indicated the current importance of correspondence study courses in his statement that ". . . home study is one of the few forms of education that is booming. More than three million students are now

taking courses by mail." These statements illustrate the acceptance of the correspondence study course as a viable alternative to the on-campus course.

Another reason for the acceptance of correspondence study courses has been the attention to quality in determining the relevant content and in the development of the format and the materials. Because of the attention to quality offerings, companies have accepted the correspondence study course as a way of providing training for the workers to function while using the new technologies in their present job or in preparing for a new job. The support for correspondence study courses was promoted by C. Marvin Mandery, director of personnel for the ten thousand-employee parent company of General Mills. He commented that employers are indicating acceptance of off-campus credits as long as they are from an accepted degree-granting school (Changing Times, 1983:71).

Holmberg (1980:111) further supports the acceptance of correspondence courses with a conclusion based on a review of studies by Beiger and others by concluding, ". . . examinations proved that cognitive study objectives in general . . . are attained at least as well by distant study based on the written word than in conventional classes." Carter (1982:4), after a review of Childs (1971) and Macken, Van den Heuvel, Suppes and Suppes (1976), and others comparing correspondence and other forms of instruction, also concluded, ". . . that

correspondence students achieve as much as students studying in other ways; and when there is a difference, it tends to favor the correspondence study method."

Postsecondary institutions are finding that it is advantageous for several institutions to cooperate in the offering of correspondence study courses. This is particularly beneficial to both when one has a production and delivery system in place and the other can provide developers with expertise in needed occupational areas. As Young (1984:5) states, ". . . there are enticing opportunities for effective collaboration among higher education institutions." Such is the case in Wisconsin where the UW-Extension and the VTAE System collaborated to enlarge the correspondence study course offerings to include occupationally-oriented courses. The UW-Extension Division had the delivery system mechanisms; e.g., editors, format, printing, promotion, etc., in place. The VTAE System had instructors having experience and training in developing and presenting occupational courses to on-campus students. With some training and assistance, these instructors were able to develop occupationally-oriented courses in the correspondence study format.

The selection of the course, Medical Terminology, for development in 1983, was based on several factors. UW-Extension staff had identified a market for the course. The market included:

1. Premedical students; i.e., those interested in a career in the medical occupations.

2. Paramedical workers trained on the job without the benefit of formal training.

3. Medical program students wishing a more complete terminology course.

LTI had a staff member who authored a medical terminology text, organized according to the systems of the body. He was also interested in developing the correspondence study format.

The text, Terminology for the Health Professions, was selected for use in the course. The developer and this researcher comprised the LTI staff involved in the development of the course materials. Because a large portion of many workers' time involves the spoken terminology, the developer desired the inclusion of a set of audiocassette tapes in the package of materials to be sent to the student. Originally, the words, prefixes, and suffixes were to be dictated on the audiocassette tape. The UW-Extension staff, however, questioned the need for all words to be included on tape. A compromise was reached whereby one sixty-minute audiotape would be included. The developer selected the words from each lesson in the early lessons that the audio would contribute most to student learning. An agreement was reached regarding inclusion of additional pronunciations upon the course revision provided student interest was sufficient to warrant it.

Promotion is important for any product in an effort to have the consumer buy it. Correspondence study courses are no exception. Good correspondence courses, ready on a shelf, are not valuable. Only when students are able to learn the knowledge and skills included in the

course is it valuable in carrying out the mission of the institution. Therefore, an important factor in correspondence study is the promotion of the courses, so interested persons will become aware of the availability of each course. Even with various promotional methods, it is important to note that "many of the students said they found out about the course they were taking through a personal acquaintance" (Stephens, 1979:27).

Course student feedback is desired for a number of reasons. One reason is to obtain information to determine if the student objectives have been met by completing the course. Feedback is also important in determining revisions of content to be made.

It is also important to an institution to obtain student information to determine the type of person enrolling in the course. Carter (1982:3) indicates the ". . . persons choosing distance education programs may be of a different sort than those who choose residential programs . . . students choose form of study because it better suits their personal and life-styles . . . ."

Various media materials are used in the course. Feedback regarding the value of the various components is essential for decisions regarding changes. Holmberg (1980:111) emphasizes that correspondence study materials differ from the textbook and questions in that they must ". . . induce the student to learn. It replaces the teacher comments and the discussion of the exposition."

Feedback is also needed to determine procedural modifications to be made. Macken, et al., (1976:6) caution that correspondence study involves ". . . teaching, not just an opportunity to learn . . . one reason the dropout rates for distance study are so large may be because they have given insufficient attention to this problem . . . ." They further suggest that the completion of the first lesson relatively soon after enrollment is vital because "studies have shown that the students most likely to follow through with a distance education program are those who submit their first lesson soon after receiving them." This indicates the importance of establishing contact with students not returning the first lesson soon after its receipt and addressing the problems being encountered by the student.

Feedback is also important in determining the type(s) of promotion needed to make potential students aware of the course. Demographic and personal characteristics and purpose(s) for which the course was taken are important in determining if the target population is participating in the course. Decisions can then be made regarding the promotional efforts necessary.

The goal of LTI and the UW-Extension Division is to have a course that enables people to meet their goals and to inform them that it is available. As Holbrook (1984:9) stated, ". . . the key is not how neatly and fast and clever something works, not how sharp the color of graphics, but how will students learn best." Stephens (1978:28) stated, ". . . it is advantageous to pay careful attention to student complaints" as a means of reviewing the course to ensure that it satisfies

their needs and is organized for reasonable ease of learning. To this end, it is as important to obtain feedback from students enrolled regarding instruction in correspondence study courses as it is from students enrolled in on-campus courses.

Significance

The results of this study were helpful to the University of Wisconsin-Extension Division and Lakeshore Technical Institute staff in providing information regarding types and characteristics of students, students' learning interaction style preferences, the importance of the audio component in student learning, reasons for enrolling, and how students became aware of course. This information was necessary to determine if the correspondence course was meeting student needs, was effective in its design, and contents and adequate audio component was promoted effectively.

The information obtained was useful to LTI and the UW-Extension staffs in making decisions regarding changes in course components, course content, course delivery, and course promotion. These decisions were and will continue to be important as more "new and nontraditional students" (Cross, 1981) are electing to enroll in correspondence courses for career preparation or for upgrading training for effective job performance. The decisions will potentially provide more effective instruction and improved promotion of available courses to those who might benefit.

The study was also important in that it marked a cooperative effort between UW-Extension and LTI staff, not only in developing the course but also in obtaining information about the characteristics of students enrolling in the course and feedback regarding their feelings regarding course components and promotion. Effective cooperation between the two systems, UW and VTAE, must be promoted through efforts such as this so the missions of both are fulfilled and the strengths of each are used to the maximum. In these days of limited resources and increased demands for educational services, effective cooperation is especially important.

The study of the types, characteristics, and feelings of students enrolled in the correspondence study course, Medical Terminology, was appropriate for the seminar "Societal Factors" because of the emphasis on characteristics of various types of learners, especially of the new and nontraditional students. Alternative delivery methods, changes in course components and content, and changes in course promotion methods must be implemented and evaluated to determine those that are most effective for the new markets of students. The end result goes beyond the student in that better occupationally prepared students will result in a more productive society.

CHAPTER 3

Procedures

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

Adult Level Course - The level of course designed for upgrading or retraining employed or previously employed adults. The level is characterized by greater incorporation of student experiences in the learning process and less rigorous formal student evaluation. Upon completion of the course, certificates are awarded.

Alternative Delivery - A method for delivery of instruction that is an alternative to the structured classroom. Includes are delivery methods such as correspondence study, instructional radio, and instructional television.

Cooperative Offering - An instructional offering made possible by the joint efforts of two or more educational systems. The expertise of each system is used to provide content and delivery method so duplication of staff and equipment is reduced or eliminated.

Correspondence Study Course - An alternative delivery of instruction method in which "the learner is at a distance from the teacher for much, most, or even all of the time during the teaching-learning process" (Carter, 1982:2 and Holmberg, 1980:107).

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) - A standard method of equating students served in course offerings in a postsecondary system. Thirty student credits is one full-time equivalents. Hours per credit may vary in the adult-, technical-, or vocational-level course offerings, however.

Lakeshore Technical Institute (LTI) - The actual facility within the Lakeshore Vocational, Technical and Adult Education District boundaries at which the postsecondary instruction is conducted. It is also used as short for Lakeshore Vocational, Technical and Adult Educational (VTAE) District.

Lakeshore Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) District - One of sixteen public geographic districts within the Wisconsin Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) System. Its boundary includes the boundaries of eighteen public secondary school districts in east-central Wisconsin.

Minimum Class Size - The minimum number of students normally required before a course may be offered. This number in the VTAE System is twelve unless unusual circumstances are encountered; e.g., unique course, required upper level course, etc.

New Student - "The student of any age or circumstances underprepared to do college work . . ." (Cross, 1980:1).

Nontraditional Student - The student that is one of the ". . . older, part-time learners who . . . are usually educationally independent, well motivated, and above average in academics" (Cross, 1980:1).

Technical Level Course - That level of course designed for training for functioning in midmanagement and technician type positions. The associate degree is awarded for the completion of a program of courses at this level.

University of Wisconsin (UW)-Extension Division - A unit of the University of Wisconsin having the primary function of disseminating university information to primarily residents of the state that cannot attend the university. Information may be in the form of bulletins, seminars, short courses, correspondence courses, etc., that help the individual become a more productive member of society.

University of Wisconsin (UW) System - A system of public post-secondary educational institutions in Wisconsin for the purpose of offering education to its residents. The courses offered lead to the baccalaureate degree or higher, except for the Extension Division. The system includes the major research university at Madison, a limited doctoral granting university at Milwaukee, and eleven state universities and sixty-five, two-year campuses located throughout the state. The leadership and direction is provided by a board of regents and its appointed chancellor. The individual facilities are supported by student tuition and fees, state funds, grants and projects, and contract awards.

Vocational Level Course - The level of course designed for the type of position requiring a considerable amount of hands-on performance with minimum theoretical basis required. The vocational diploma is awarded for the completion of a program of courses at this level.

Wisconsin Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) System - The legislated organization of sixteen autonomous public two-year postsecondary school districts charged with responsibility of offering vocational, technical, and adult education below the baccalaureate level to all persons in Wisconsin above the age of sixteen. Each district has autonomy by virtue of its locally-appointed board of education and its authority to levy taxes for its support. The leadership and direction is provided by a state board and its appointed director. The individual districts are supported by student tuition and fees, state aids, grants and projects, contract awards, and district property taxes.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were identified in the study:

1. Only those students enrolling in the cooperatively offered postsecondary level correspondence course, Medical Terminology, during the period June 1984 through May 1986 were included.

2. The individual respondents' interpretations of items and bases for making choices appropriate to each item might vary as definitions for each choice were not provided.

3. Medical Terminology is a highly memory-oriented course. Results may not be applicable to a theoretical-type course.

4. Students may have had a variety of purposes for enrolling in the course and, therefore, had a variety of bases for selecting their choices.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made concerning this study:

1. It was assumed that the students enrolled in the course were in the position to provide data pertaining to their characteristics and feelings regarding importance of course components in their learning.

2. It was assumed that similar postsecondary levels of instruction would have similar reactions and definitions to choices provided for each item.

3. It was assumed that students enrolled in this course during previous semesters would have responded in a similar manner.

Procedures for Collecting the Data

The procedures used in this study will include the following:

1. A review of the literature pertaining to alternative instructional delivery methods, especially that of correspondence study, was made. The literature was identified through a DIALOG search which identified Research in Education (RIE) titles, Current Journal in Education (CJIE) titles, and titles from other data bases in the DIALOG files. Additional resources were identified through UW-Madison sources and the Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (WBVTAE) Research Coordinating Unit (RCU) sources.

2. The sample selected included students enrolling in the UW-Extension Division correspondence course, Medical Terminology, during the period June 1, 1984, through May 31, 1986. The names and addresses of these students were obtained from recorded forwarded by the Extension

Division to LTI for FTE count purposes. One hundred twenty-eight students were identified, fifty-four during 1984-1985, and seventy-four during 1985-1986 (see Appendix C).

3. A survey-type instrument was developed to obtain the data. The instrument was developed by LTI curriculum and alternative learning staff. The instrument (see Appendix D) contained fifteen items in the following categories:

a. Purpose(s) for enrolling in the course
b. Reasons for enrolling in a course by correspondence
c. Importance of various learning support
d. Importance of audio course component
e. Employment status while enrolled in the course
f. School status while enrolled in the course
g. How enrollee became aware of the course
h. Enrollee characteristics
i. Prior experience with a correspondence course

4. The validity of each item was addressed by submitting the instrument to various LTI staff members in alternative learning, graphics, and communications positions. The reliability of the instrument was addressed by submitting the instrument to a number of students for obtaining concerns regarding the wording or intent of each item. The items were modified in accordance with the concerns and suggestions indicated by members of each group.

5. A mail-type survey was utilized in this study. The envelope containing the survey instrument and the cover letter (see Appendix E) was mailed to the individual. The cover letter indicated the importance of the study and a response requested by a specified date in order to make modifications in the course. A postage-paid return envelope was also included to facilitate the instrument's return.

6. Follow-up of nonrespondents was accomplished by mailing a follow-up card (see Appendix F), a duplicate survey instrument, and a second postage-paid return envelope.

Procedures for Treatment of the Data

The responses were sent to the LTI Data Processing center for computer tabulations and calculations (see Appendix G). The percentage of respondents, percentage of responses, and weighted means for the various items were calculated. These were required for use in interpreting the data.

The chi square was used to determine the representativeness of the responses. The two criteria, geographic location proportions, and female to male proportions were identified as important. To determine if there was significant difference between the proportions of enrollees and respondents for each criteria, chi square values for a two-tailed test at the .05 level were used. A comparison of the calculated X^2 value and the critical X^2 value for the appropriate degrees of freedom were made for each criteria.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The study produced results in a number of areas. These are included in the following paragraphs within this section.

Table 1

Location of Enrollees and Respondents in Correspondence Course, Medical Terminology, During 1984-1986

Location	Surveys Sent No.	Surveys Sent Percent	Surveys Received No.	Surveys Received Percent
In Lakeshore VTAE District	13	10	9	12
Outside Lakeshore VTAE District but in Wisconsin	100	81	59	81
Outside Wisconsin	11	9	5	7
-Colorado 1/1			0/0	
-Illinois 1/1			0/0	
-Maryland 1/1			0/0	
-Michigan 1/1			1/1	
-Minnesota 5/4			4/6	
-Pennsylvania 2/2			0/0	
Totals	124	100	73	100

One hundred twenty-eight survey instruments were distributed. Four were returned with an indication that the person had never enrolled (three) or had immediately dropped (1). Therefore, 124 responses were possible. Six envelopes were returned as undeliverable. Seventy-three (64 percent) completed survey forms were returned. The survey instruments' distribution and return are indicated in Table 1.

Eighty-one percent of the persons enrolled and also the completed survey instruments responses received were from persons residing outside the Lakeshore VTAE District but in Wisconsin. Only 12 percent of the completed survey instruments received were from respondents residing in the Lakeshore VTAE District. The rest of completed survey instruments were from respondents residing in six states other than Wisconsin.

Tabulations of responses for each of the items were completed. Percentages for each choice were calculated. Weighted means were also calculated where appropriate. Written responses were also summarized for items where appropriate. These results (see Appendix G) are reported in the rest of this section.

The first item requested an indication of the main purpose(s) for which the correspondence study course, Medical Terminology, had been taken. The percentage of respondents indicating each of the six choices was calculated. The responses and percentages are found in Table 2. The information in Table 1 indicates that forty (56 percent) respondents indicated the course was taken to satisfy a requirement of a degree or diploma program. Twenty-one (30 percent) respondents indicated they

enrolled in the course for career advancement, not to complete a degree or diploma. Fourteen (20 percent) respondents indicated they enrolled in the course in order to perform present duties better/easier. The other purposes for enrolling in the course were each indicated by less than 10 percent of the respondent. The purposes indicated as "other" by the respondents is included in Appendix G.

Table 2

Purposes for Enrolling in the Correspondence Course, Medical Terminology, as Indicated by Respondents

Purpose	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses	Percent of Respondents*
Needed for degree or diploma	40	47	56
Career advancement, not for degree or diploma	21	25	30
Perform present duties better/easier	14	16	20
Other	6	7	8
Required to keep present job	2	2	3
Needed for certification	2	2	3
Totals	85	100	--

*Based on 73 respondents

The second item requested an indication of the factor(s) important in the respondent's choice of a correspondence delivery course. The responses and percentages are included in Table 3. The four most

important factors listed by respondents, in order of percentage response, were: no conflict with work schedule (64 percent of respondents), no travel to class (56 percent of respondents), interested in content (51 percent of respondents), and preferred study at home or work instead of school (48 percent of respondents). The percentage of the respondents indicating each of the other choices ranged from 19 percent to 25 percent. The factors indicated as "other" by respondents are included in Appendix G.

Table 3

Reasons for Enrolling in a Correspondence Course as Indicated by Respondents

Factor	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses	Percent of Respondents*
No conflict with work schedule	47	21	64
No travel to class	41	18	56
Interested in content	37	16	51
Preferred study at home or work instead of school	35	16	48
Course not available at campus near home	18	8	25
No conflict with leisure activities schedule	17	8	23
No need for babysitter	16	7	22
Other	14	6	19

*Based on 73 respondents

The third item requested a rating of the importance of the four ways of receiving assistance in understanding the difficult parts of the course. The responses and weighted values are found in Table 4. The weights used were 1 for "most important" through 4 for "least important." Various combinations were indicated. The most important resource indicated, "books and references," had a calculated weighted value of 1.14, slightly greater than the highest possible calculated weighted value of 1.00. There was less than 0.50 difference between the calculated weighted values of the three other resources with the calculated weighted values of 2.59 for "teacher," 3.08 for "other students," and 3.37 for "family and friends."

Table 4

Importance of Resources in Understanding Difficult Parts of Course Indicated by Respondents

Resource(s)	Relative Importance*
Books and references	1.14
Teacher	2.59
Family and friends	3.37
Other students	3.08

*Based on "1" as most important through "4" as least important

The fourth item requested an indication of the importance of the audiotape component to the respondent. The choices ranged from "not important" to "essential." The responses and the weighted mean using 1

for "essential" through 4 for "not important" are found in Table 5. Slightly more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated either "not important" (37 percent) or "somewhat important" (34 percent). The weighted mean was 2.97 or "somewhat important." A number of respondents indicated the audiotape was never used (see Appendix G).

Table 5

Importance of Audiotape in Learning as Indicated by Respondents

Level of Importance	Responses		Weight Value
	Number	Percent	
Not important	27	37	4
Somewhat important	25	34	3
Very important	13	18	2
Essential	8	11	1
Totals	73	100	--

Weighted Mean* = 2.97

*Based on "1" for essential through "4" for not important

The fifth item requested an indication of the feelings about the number of audiotapes included. The five choices ranged from "far too many" to "far too few." The number and percentage of responses for each choice and the weighted mean are included in Table 6. None of the choices was indicated by more than 30 percent of the respondents. The

weighted mean was calculated using 1 for "far too few" through 4 for "far too many." The weighted mean was 3.25 or slightly toward the "too many" side of "about right number."

Table 6

Feelings Regarding Number of Audiotapes Included as Indicated by Respondents

Response	Responses		Weight Value
	Number	Percent	
Far too many	19	26	5
Too many	11	15	4
About right number	22	30	3
Too few	11	15	2
Far too few	10	14	1
Totals	73	100	--

Weighted Mean* = 3.25

*Based on "1" for far too few through "5" for far too many

The sixth item requested an indication of the respondent's study preference. The indicated choices and numbers and percentages of responses are found in Table 7. Many respondents (85 percent) indicated the preference to "study by myself."

Table 7

Indicated Study Preference of Respondents

Preference	Responses	
	Number	Percent
Study by myself	60	85
Study with other students	11	15
Totals	71	100

The seventh item required an indication of the extent of the respondent's employment while enrolled in the correspondence course. The choices ranged from "not employed" through "forty-one or more hours per week." The number and percentage of responses for each choice and the weighted mean are found in Table 8. The weighted mean was calculated using 1 for "forty-one or more hours per week" through 5 for "not employed." The responses ranged from 15 percent to 27 percent for each choice, with "not employed" being indicated by 27 percent and "employed thirty-five to forty hours per week" being indicated by 23 percent of the respondents, respectively. Each of the other choices was indicated by less than twenty of the respondents. The weighted mean of 3.17 was slightly on the "employed twenty or fewer hours per week" side of "employed twenty-one to thirty-four hours per week."

Table 8

Number of Hours of Employment per Week While Enrolled in Course as Indicated by Respondents

Hours of Employment per Week	Responses Number	Percent	Weight Value
Not employed	20	27	5
Employed 20 or fewer	12	17	4
Employed 21 to 34	13	18	3
Employed 35 to 40	17	23	2
Employed 41 or more	11	15	1
Totals	73	100	--

Weighted Mean* = 3.17

Based on 1 for "employed 41 or more hours per week" through 5 for "not employed"

The eighth item requested an indication of the school status of the respondent while enrolled in the correspondence course. The five choices ranged from "not enrolled in any other course" through "enrolled as a full-time college student." The number and percentage of responses for each choice are included in Table 9. The largest percentage of respondents (44 percent) were "not enrolled in any other course." About one-third (31 percent) were "enrolled as a part-time vocational-technical school student." Almost one-fifth (19 percent) of the respondents were enrolled part time in a college. No respondent was enrolled as a

full-time college student. The weight mean was 4.13, which was on the "not enrolled" side of "enrolled as a part-time vocational-technical student.

Table 9

School Status of Respondents While Enrolled in Course

School Status	Responses Number	Responses Percent	Weight Value
Not enrolled in any other course	32	44	5
Enrolled as a part-time vocational-technical school student	22	31	4
Enrolled as a full-time vocational-technical school student	14	19	3
Enrolled as a part-time college student	4	6	2
Enrolled as a full-time college student	0	0	1
Totals	72	100	--

Weighted Mean* = 4.13

Based on 1 for "enrolled as a full-time college student" through 5 for "not enrolled in any other course"

The ninth item requested an indication regarding how the respondent became aware of the existence of the course. The number and percentage of responses for each choice are included in Table 10. Slightly less than one-half (45 percent) of the respondents indicated that knowledge of existence of the course was gained from "received brochure/bulletin from technical school or university." Approximately

one-fourth of the respondents indicated that knowledge about the course was "suggested by friend" (25 percent) and by "other" (22 percent), respectively. Sources of awareness of the course indicated for the "other" choice are included in Appendix G.

Table 10

Sources of Knowledge of Course Existence as Indicated by Respondents

Source	Number	Percent of Responses	Percent of Respondents*
Brochure/bulletin from technical school or university	33	42	45
Suggested by a friend	18	23	25
Other	16	20	22
Someone at place of employment	7	9	10
High school teacher or counselor	5	6	7
Total	79	100	--

*Based on 73 respondents

The tenth item requested an indication of the educational level of the student prior to enrolling in the correspondence course. The choices ranged from "less than high school graduate" through "beyond bachelor's degree." The number and percentage of responses for each choice and the weighted mean are included in Table 11. The weighted mean was calculated using 1 for "beyond bachelor's degree" through 6 for "less than high school graduate." The greatest percentage (44 percent)

of respondents indicated "some school after high school" with a slightly smaller percentage (36 percent) having a "vocational diploma or associate degree." Each of the other choices was indicated by less than 10 percent of the respondents. The weighted mean was 3.67 or slightly toward the "vocational diploma or associate degree" side of "some school after high school."

Table 11

Level of Education of Respondents Prior to Enrolling in Correspondence Course

Level of Education	Responses Number	Responses Percent	Weight Value
Less than high school graduate	5	5	6
High school graduate	4	6	5
Some school after high school	32	44	4
Vocational diploma or associate degree	26	36	3
Bachelor's degree	3	4	2
Beyond bachelor's degree	2	3	1
Total	72	100	--

Weighted Mean* = 3.67

Based on 1 for "beyond bachelor's degree" and 6 for "less than high school graduate"

The eleventh item requested the respondent's indication of the number of years between when last attended school and enrolling in the correspondence course. The choices ranged from "less than one year"

through "more than twenty years." The number and percentage of responses for each choice and the weighted mean are included in Table 12. The weighted mean was calculated using 1 for "more than twenty years" through 5 for "less than one year." Approximately two-thirds of the respondents indicated a time span of five years or less between their last attendance at school and enrolling in the correspondence course, with indications of "less than one year" (40 percent) and "one to five years" (26 percent), respectively. Responses for each of the other choices ranged from 10 to 15 percent. The weighted mean was 3.74 or slightly toward the "one to five years" side of "six to ten years."

Table 12

Number of Years Elapsed Between Last Course and This Correspondence Course Indicated by Respondents

Years	Responses		Weight Value
	Number	Percent	
Less than 1 year	29	40	5
1 to 5 years	19	26	4
6 to 10 years	7	10	3
11 to 20 years	10	14	2
More than 20 years	7	10	1
Total	72	100	--

Weighted Mean* = 3.75

*Based on 1 for "more than 20 years" through 5 for "less than 1 year"

The twelfth item requested an indication of the number of correspondence courses taken (not including the correspondence course Medical Terminology) by the respondent. The number and percentage of responses for each choice and the weighted mean are included in Table 13. The choices ranged from "none" through "four or more." The weighted mean was calculated using 1 for "four or more" and 5 for "none." A large percentage of respondents (68 percent) indicated "none" as they had not taken a previous correspondence course. Another important percentage (22 percent) indicated enrolling in "one" previous

Table 13

Number of Correspondence Courses Taken by Respondents Prior to This Course

Number of Courses	Responses		Weight Value
	Number	Percent	
None	50	68	5
One	16	22	4
Two	2	3	3
Three	0	0	2
Four or more	5	7	1
Total	73	100	--

Weighted Mean* = 4.23

*Based on 1 for "four or more" through 5 for "none"

correspondence course. Each of the other choices was indicated by 7 or less percent of the respondents. The weighted mean was 4.23 or "none" side of "one."

The thirteenth item requested an indication of the respondent's age when the course was begun. The number and percentage of responses for each choice and the mean age are included in Table 14. The choices ranged from "under eighteen years old" to "over fifty-nine years old." The weighted mean was calculated using 1 for "over fifty-nine years old" through 7 for "under eighteen years old." The choice indicated by the

Table 14

Age of Respondent When Enrolled in Course

Age	Responses		Weighted Values*
	Number	Percent	
Under 18 years	3	4	17
19 to 21 years	8	11	20
22 to 29 years	18	25	25.5
30 to 39 years	27	37	35.5
40 to 49 years	15	21	45.5
50 to 59 years	1	1	55.5
Over 59 years	1	1	62
Total	73	100	--

Mean Age = 33.3 years of age

*Based on age 16 as minimum age for enrollment and age 65 as retirement

greatest number of respondents was "thirty to thirty-nine years old" (37 percent). The choices "twenty-two to twenty-nine years old" and "forty to forty-nine years old" were indicated by 18 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Only one respondent each indicated the remaining three age categories. The mean age was 33.3 years.

The fourteenth item requested an indication of the respondent's ethnic background. The number and percentage of responses for each choice are included in Table 15. All but two (98 percent) of the respondents were Caucasian. One respondent each indicated having an "Asian" and an "other" background.

Table 15

Ethnic Background of Respondents

Ethnic Background	Responses	
	Number	Percent
Caucasian	71	98
Asian	1	1
Other	1	1
Black	0	0
Hispanic	0	0
Middle Eastern	0	0
Total	73	100

The fifteenth item requested an indication of the sex of the respondent. The number and percentage of responses for each choice are included in Table 16. One hundred and ten (89 percent) of the enrollees were female. Sixty-eight (93 percent)--a slightly higher percentage than that of enrollees--of the respondents were female.

Table 16

Sex of Enrollees and Respondents in Medical Terminology Course

Sex	Surveys Sent		Respondents	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Female	110	89	68	93
Male	14	11	5	7
Total	124	100	73	100

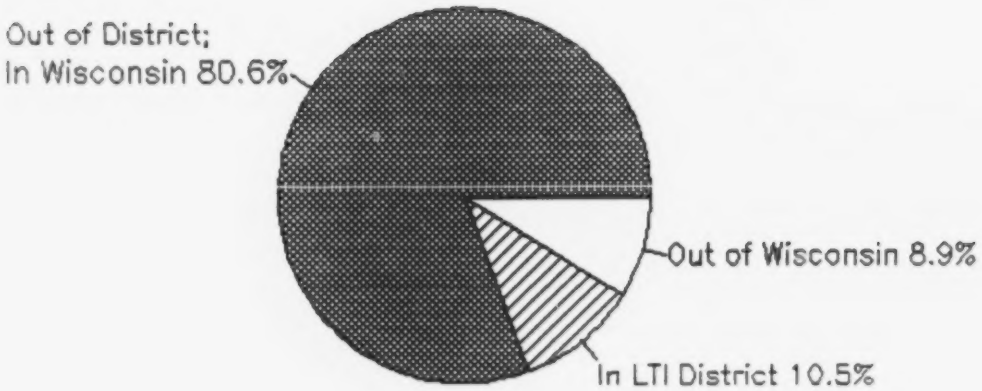
CHAPTER 5

Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

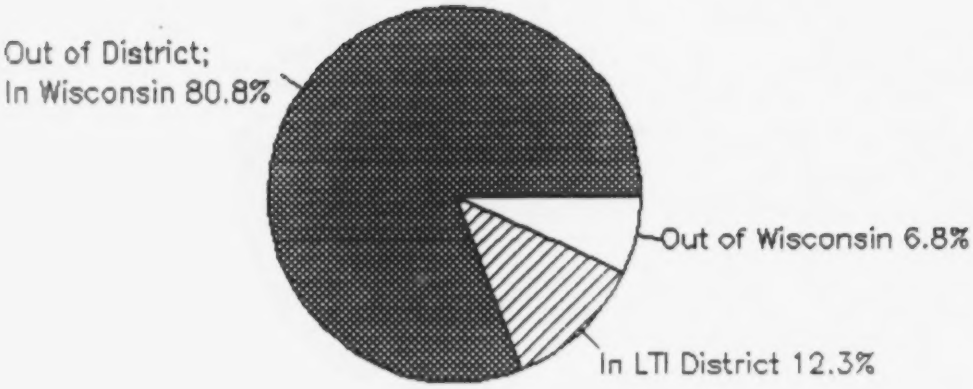
Discussion and Implications

Responses from seventy-three (64 percent) enrollees were received (see Table 1). The proportion of responses from enrollees in the correspondence course, Medical Terminology, in each of the three graphic groups; in LTI district, outside LTI district but in Wisconsin, and outside Wisconsin, as indicated by respondents on the survey instrument was similar to the proportion of enrollees in each group as indicated by addresses of the enrollees (see Figure 1). The proportion of in-district respondents (12 percent) exceeded the proportion of enrollees from in district by 2 percent. The proportion of outside district but inside Wisconsin respondents (81 percent) was the same as the proportion of enrollees from out of LTI district but in Wisconsin. The proportion of outside Wisconsin respondents (7 percent) was 2 percent less than the proportion of enrollees from outside Wisconsin. Only out of Wisconsin enrollees from the states of Michigan and Minnesota returned the completed survey instrument.

The similarity of the proportion of respondents from each group and the proportion of enrollees from each group indicated the geographic representativeness of the respondents to the total enrollee group. There was a large number and proportion (91 percent) of enrollees from Wisconsin. This indicated that the joint primary mission of LTI and the



Enrollees



Respondents

Figure 1

Geographic Location Comparison of
Enrollees and Respondents

UW-Extension to train in-Wisconsin persons in an occupation to either obtain a job or upgrade competencies to better function in the job is being met.

The sex of each enrollee was obtained from LTI student records. The sex of the respondent was requested on the survey instrument. The proportion of females to males was calculated (see Figure 2). The ratio of females to males in the enrollee group was found to be 89 percent to 11 percent. The proportion of females to males in the respondent group was found to be 93 percent to 7 percent. The response rate from the female enrollees was slightly higher than that of the male enrollees.

To determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of enrollees in each geographic region and the proportion of respondents in each geographic region, the chi square was used with calculations in accordance with directions provided by Isaac and Michael (1972:136-139). The chi square was also used to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of enrollees that were female and that were male and the proportion of respondents that were female and that were male. The critical values for chi square at the .05 level and for a two-tailed test were used.

The calculated values (X^2 = 0.41 and X^2 = 0.04) were less than the critical values (X^2_c = 5.99 and X^2 = 3.84) for the geographical significance and sex significance, respectively. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the proportion of enrollees and the proportion of respondents from each geographic region, and there also

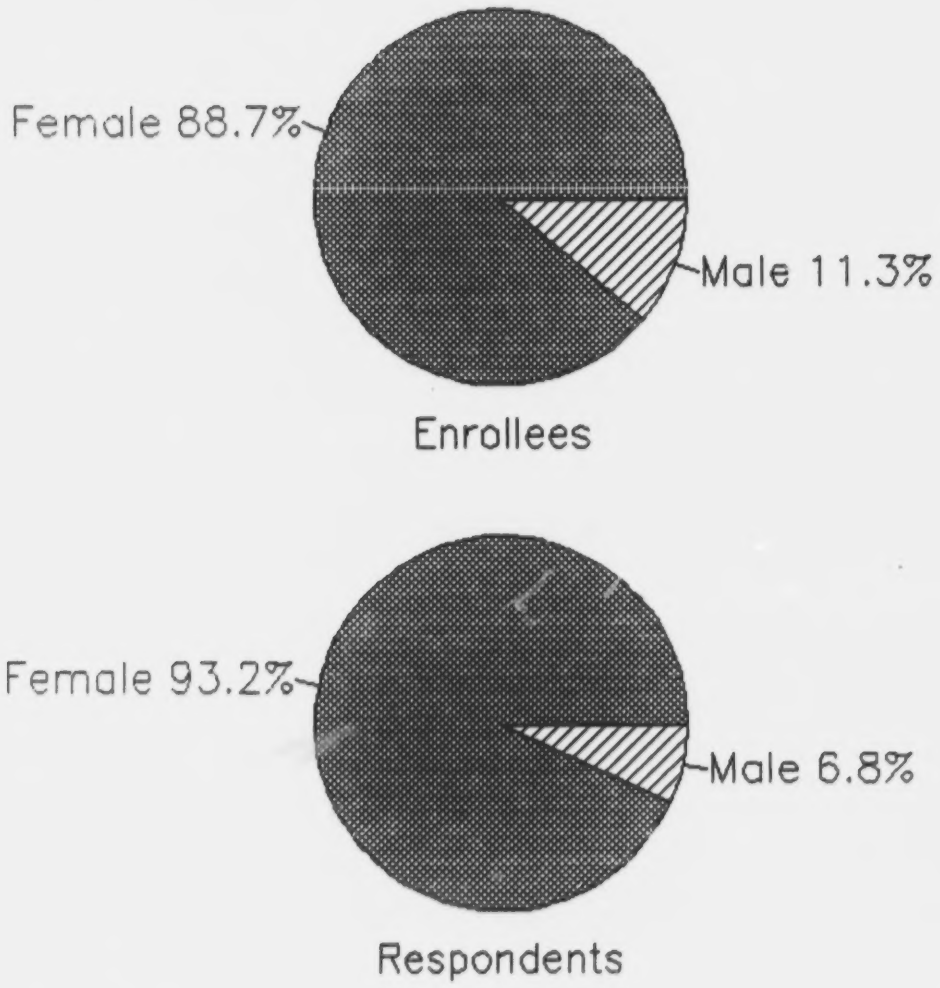


Figure 2

Sex Proportion Comparison of Enrollees
and of Respondents

was no significant difference between the proportion of enrollees and the proportion of respondents that were female or that were male.

The response comparisons (see Figure 3) indicated that the greatest proportion (56 percent) of respondents desired the course to "complete a degree or diploma." Another moderate portion (30 percent) desired the course for "career advancement but not for a degree or diploma." An additional portion (20 percent) desired the course for "better/easier performance of present duties." "Need for certification," "required to keep present job," and "other" were also indicated by a total of less than 20 percent of the respondents. Some respondents

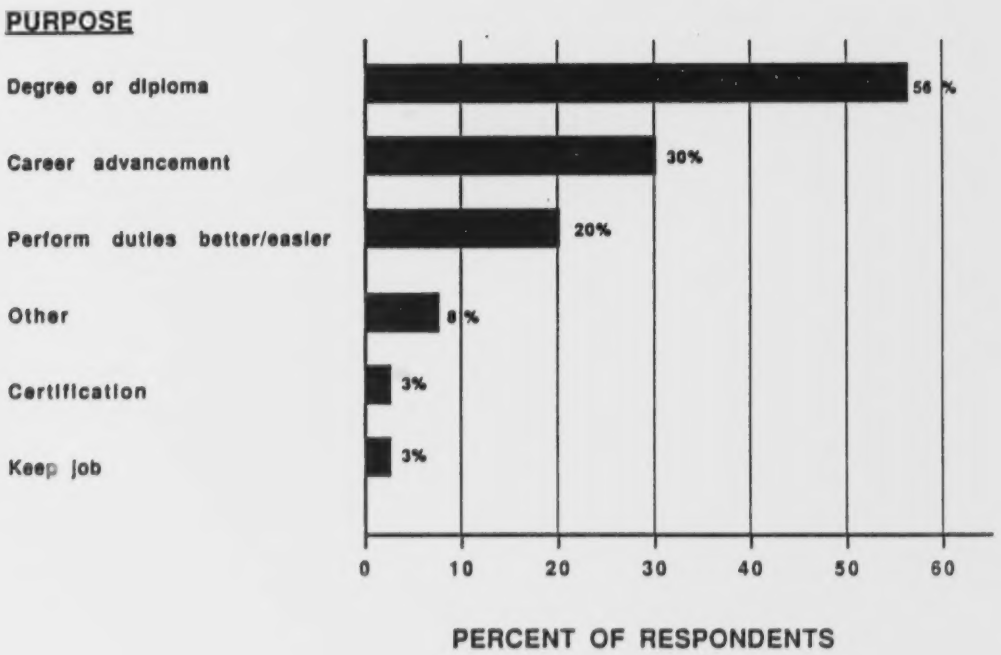


Figure 3

Purpose for Enrolling in the Correspondence Course

indicated more than one choice which accounted for a percentage of responses greater than 100 percent. Responses to the additional choices and the purposes included as an "other" choice (see Appendix G) indicated the importance of the course for a number of purposes. All of these fit within the mission statement of both the VTAE system and the UW system. The course is fulfilling its variety of purposes as projected.

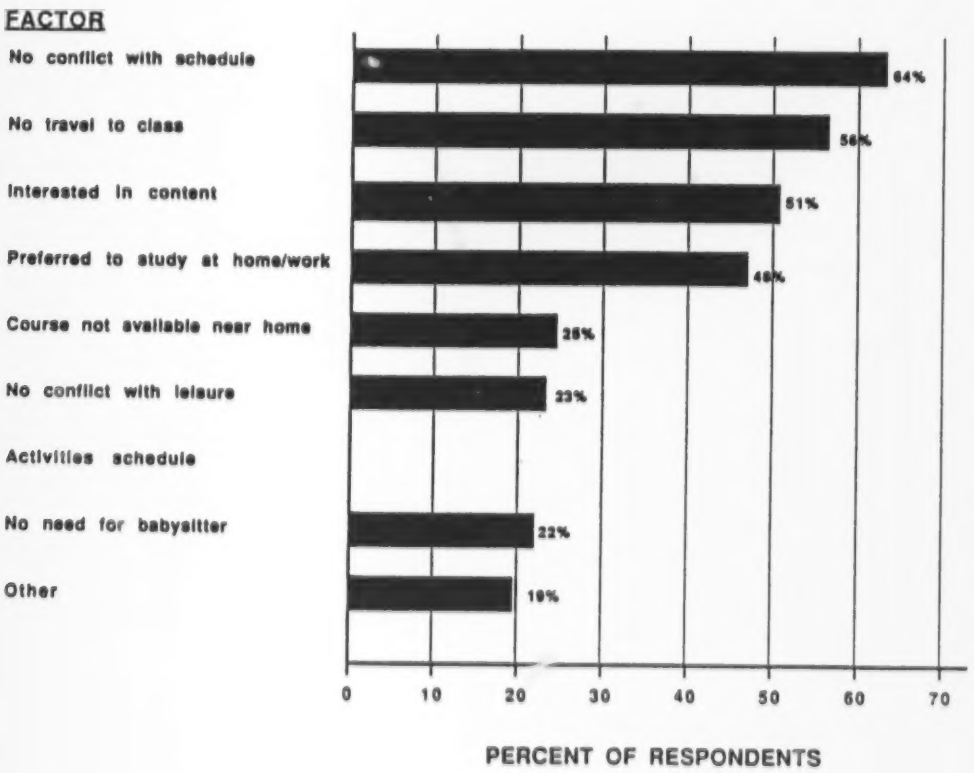
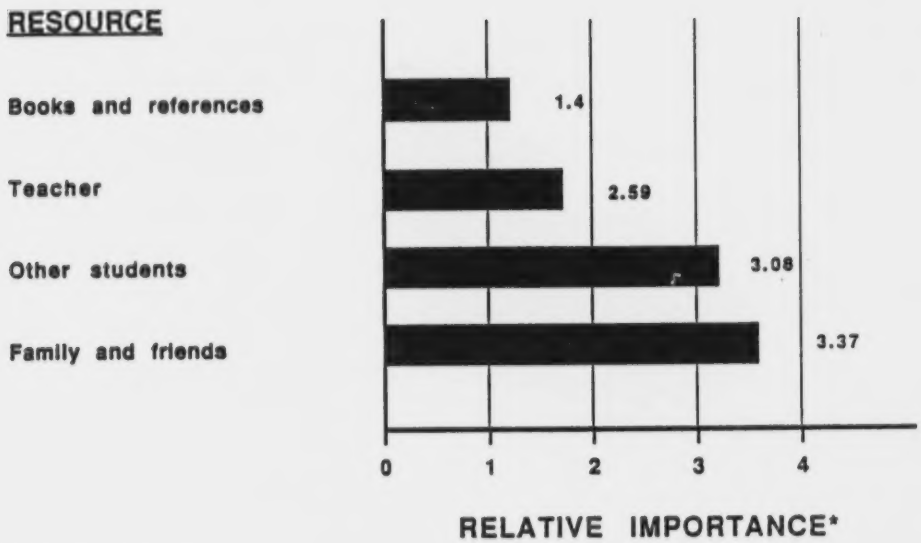


Figure 4

Comparison of Reasons for Enrolling
in the Correspondence Course

The response comparisons (see Figure 4) indicated that the reason given most often (64 percent) by respondents for enrolling in the correspondence course was "no conflict with work schedule." However, the three choices, "no travel to class" (56 percent), "interested in content" (51 percent), and "preferred to study at home or work" (48 percent), as well as the "other" responses indicated the diversity of reasons for enrolling in a correspondence course. Such a diversity of reasons indicated the importance of alternative course delivery methods, such as correspondence study in meeting the needs of this segment of the population.

The respondents (see Figure 5) indicated the relative importance of various resources in understanding difficult parts of the course. The use of "books and references" was indicated by the largest proportion of the respondents. The "teacher" was rated considerably lower while "family and friends" and "other" students were rated very low. This indicated that students enrolled in correspondence courses primarily use books and references to assist them in understanding difficult parts of the course. Of interest is a considerably lower importance of the teacher and the almost no importance placed on other persons. This should provide the basis for the support of well-developed books and written resources in correspondence study courses.



*1 = most important

4 = least important

Figure 5

Relative Importance of Various Resources in Understanding Difficult Parts of Course

A concern of the staff member who developed the written and audio materials to accompany the textbook was the adequacy of the audio component. Respondents varied considerably in their feelings regarding the importance (see Figure 6) of the audio component. While 37 percent considered the audio component to be "not important"--in fact a number indicated no use of the audio--a small portion (11 percent) indicated that the audio component was "essential."

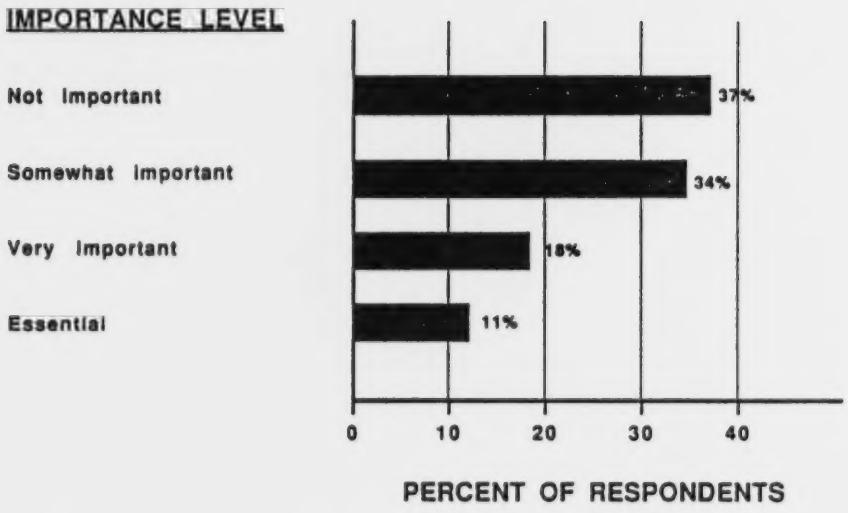


Figure 6

Importance of Audiotape Component

The respondents also indicated their feelings regarding the number of audiotapes (see Figure 7) included with the materials. The greatest proportion of respondents (30 percent) indicated about the right number of audiotapes was provided. Each of the other choices was indicated by less than 30 percent of the respondents. The weighted mean (3.25) of the responses also indicated that the right number of audiotapes was provided--the development of additional audiotapes was not supported.

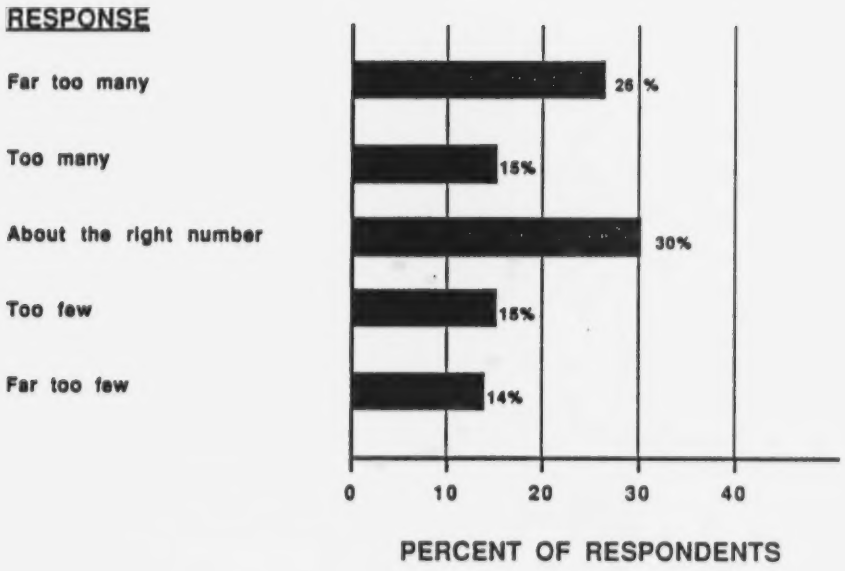


Figure 7

Respondents' Indications Regarding the Number of Audiotapes Included

The enrollees study preference was requested. The responses (see Table 7) indicated that a majority (85 percent) desired to study by themselves. Only 15 percent indicated a desire to study with other students. This may indeed be an important factor in the individual's decision to enroll in a correspondence course.

The concern for the amount of time the enrollee had available for study was also addressed. The enrollees were requested to indicate the extent of employment while enrolled. The responses (see Figure 8) indicated a wide variance in employment level. Employment levels ranged from none (27 percent) to forty-one or more hours per week (15 percent).

Almost three-fourths of the respondents were employed with two-fifths (38 percent) of the respondents indicating full-time employment (thirty-five or more hours per week), and one-third (35 percent) indicating part-time employment of less than thirty-five hours per week.

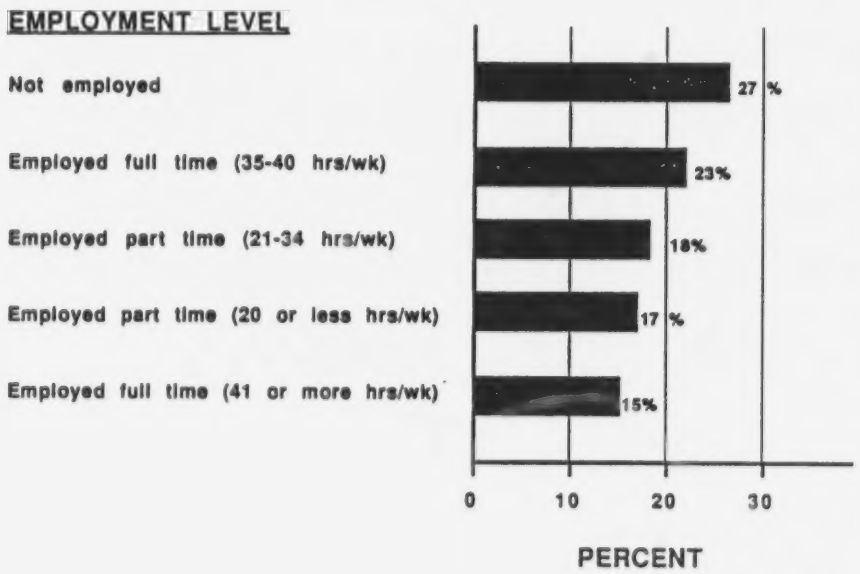


Figure 8

Employment Level of Respondents

In an effort to determine the school status of the enrollees, enrolees were requested to indicate their school status while enrolled in the correspondence course. Responses (see Figure 9) indicated that slightly less than one-half (44 percent) were not enrolled in any other course. Thirty-six percent were enrolled as part-time students, and 19 percent were enrolled as full-time students. The responses (see

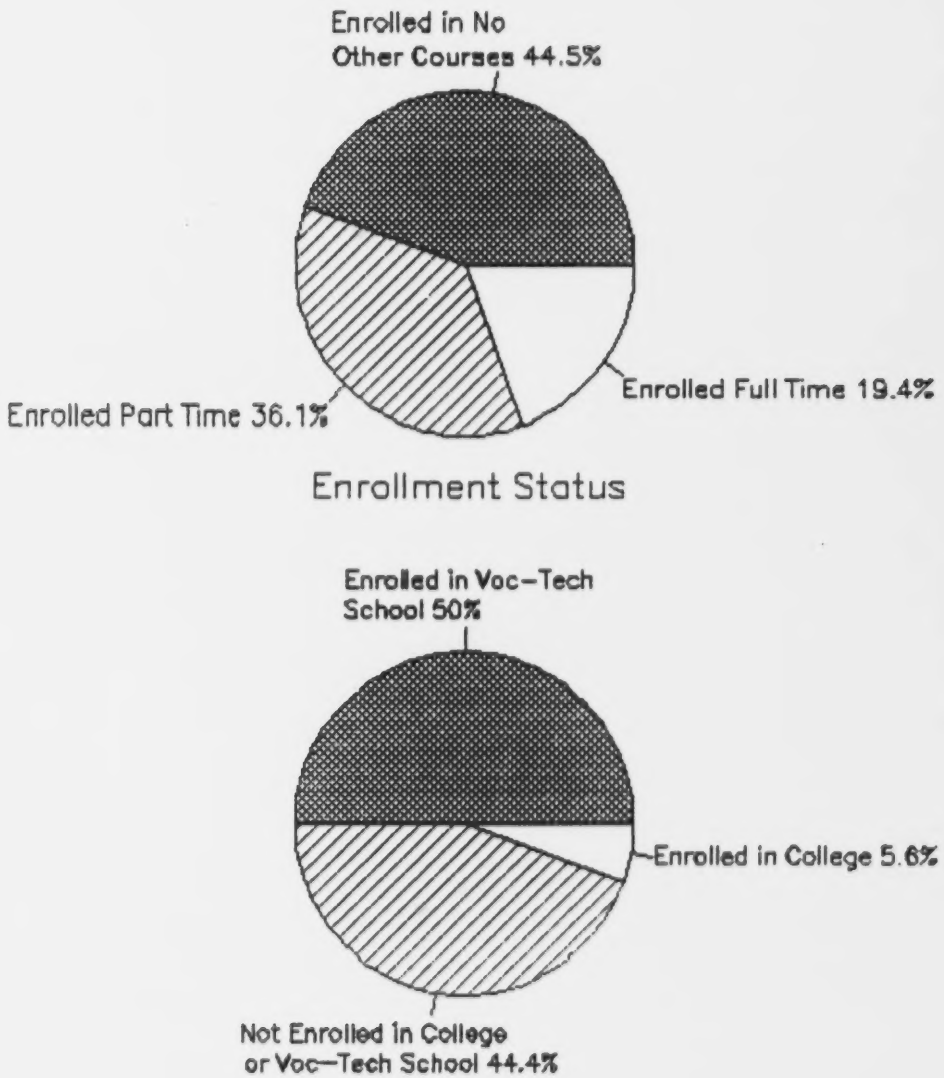


Figure 9

Enrollment Status and Location of Respondents

Figure 9) also indicated that 50 percent were enrolled in vocational-technical schools while only 6 percent were enrolled in colleges.

Of importance to LTI and the UW-Extension staff was information useful in making decisions regarding publicizing the availability of the course. Therefore, enrollees were requested to indicate the source of knowledge about the course's existence. Responses (see Figure 10) indicated a number of ways in which enrollees became aware of the course. The most important source (45 percent) was the brochure/bulletin. This supported the efforts expended in developing an attractive informative-type bulletin for distribution. Almost one-fourth of the responses

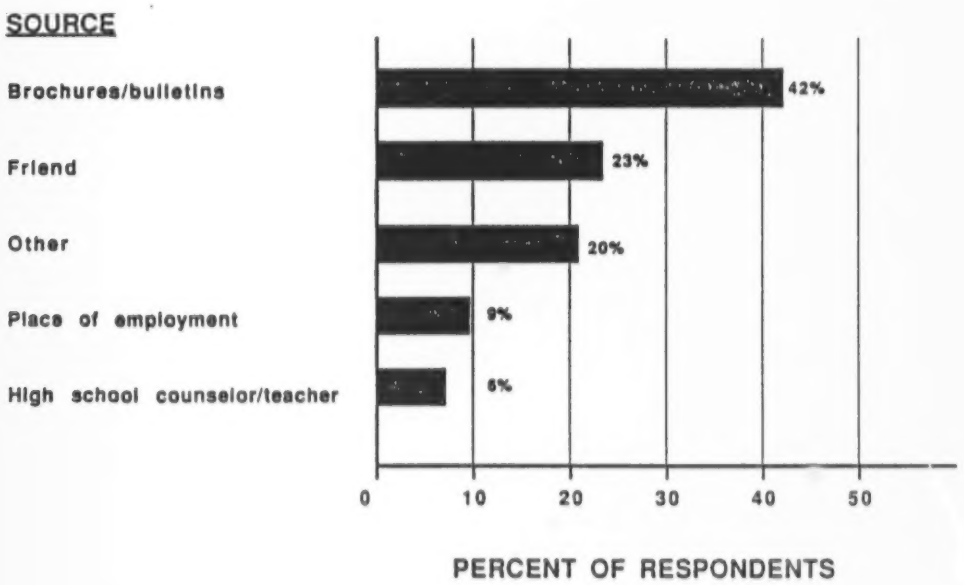


Figure 10

Sources of Knowledge Regarding
Course Availability

indicated becoming aware of the course through a friend. It, therefore, is important that the students enrolled in the course feel good about being involved in the course work so that they will continue to recommend the course to friends.

Ten percent or less of the respondents became aware of the course from a high school teacher or counselor. Slightly less than this portion became aware of the course from their place of employment. This is quite possibly due to the lack of wide distribution of course information to high schools or places of employment.

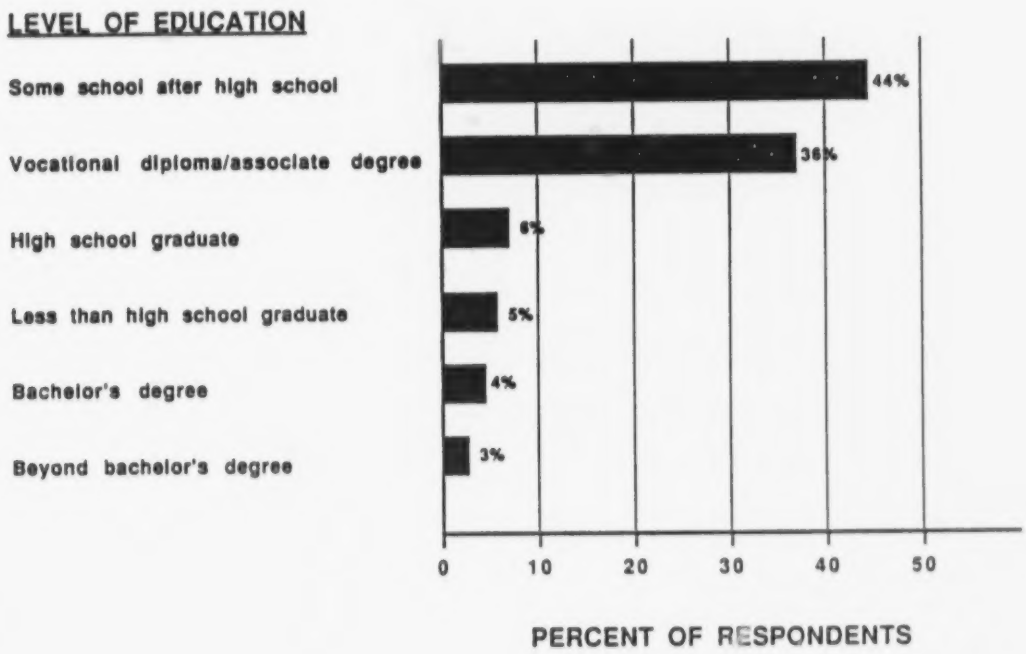


Figure 11

Level of Enrollment Prior to Enrollment

The educational level of enrollees was also considered to be important to the course developers in order to provide a basis for decisions regarding the level of the materials. The level of the materials included abstraction, amounts and types of practice exercises, and reading level of the materials. The responses (see Figure 11) indicated that almost one-half (44 percent) had some school after high school. About one-third (36 percent) had a vocational diploma or an associate degree. Each of the other choices from less than high school graduate to beyond bachelor's degree was indicated by less than 10 percent of the respondents.

There was an interest in determining the recency of other course enrollment as this could potentially have an effect on the assistance required, particularly at the beginning of the course. The responses (see Figure 12) indicated that the largest portion (40 percent) of the respondents had been enrolled in another course, although not necessarily a correspondence study course, within the last year. Another one-fourth (26 percent) indicated that it had been from one to five years between the time the respondent was enrolled in a previous course and enrollment in this correspondence course. Therefore, two-thirds (68 percent) had been enrolled in a previous course within the past five years. One-third had been enrolled in a previous course more than five years ago; some more than twenty-one years ago.

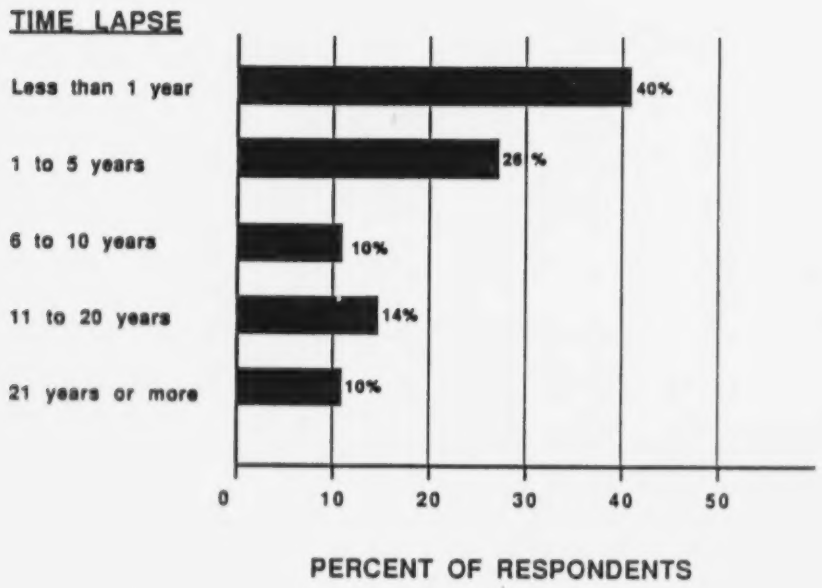


Figure 12

Years Since Enrollment in a Previous Course

Developer staff were interested in the level of enrollee awareness of procedures used in correspondence study. This was important in making decisions regarding the instructions to be provided in the conduct of the course. Responses (see Figure 13) indicated that over two-thirds (68 percent) of the respondents had not taken a correspondence course prior to enrolling in this course. Another one-fourth (22 percent) had only taken one correspondence course prior to this one. Only 10 percent had taken two or more prior correspondence courses. Directions and instructions must be clear and adequate so the large number of

enrollees without previous experience with a correspondence course will feel comfortable that they can complete the activities and adequately prepare for the exams.

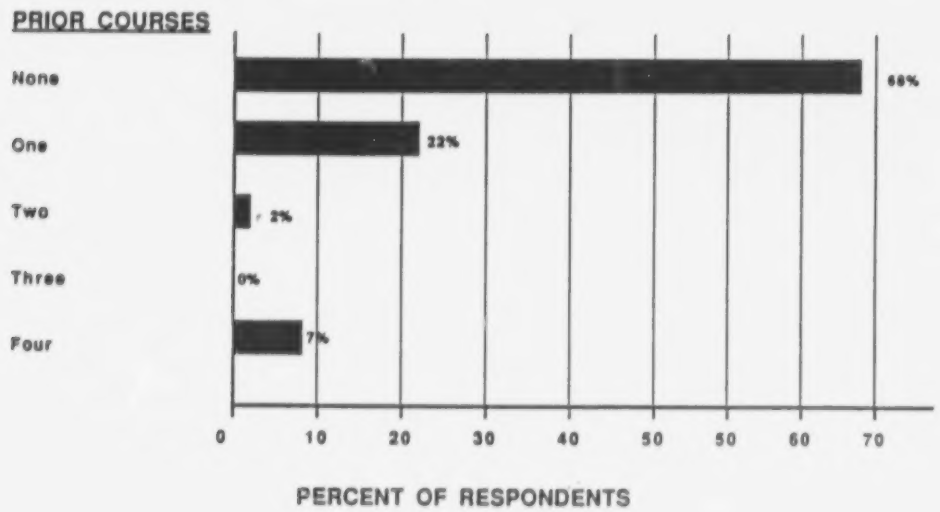


Figure 13

Number of Prior Correspondence Courses Taken

The staff were interested in the age of the enrollees to provide a basis for decisions regarding promotional efforts. Responses (see Figure 14) indicated a range of ages from under eighteen to over fifty-nine. Eighty-three percent of the respondents were in the twenty-two to forty-nine year age bracket with the largest portion (37 percent) of the respondents between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine years of age. One-fourth of the respondents were between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-nine years of age, and almost as many (21 percent) were

between the ages of forty and forty-nine years. There was a slight skew in the direction of the younger ages. The calculated mean age was 33.3 years.

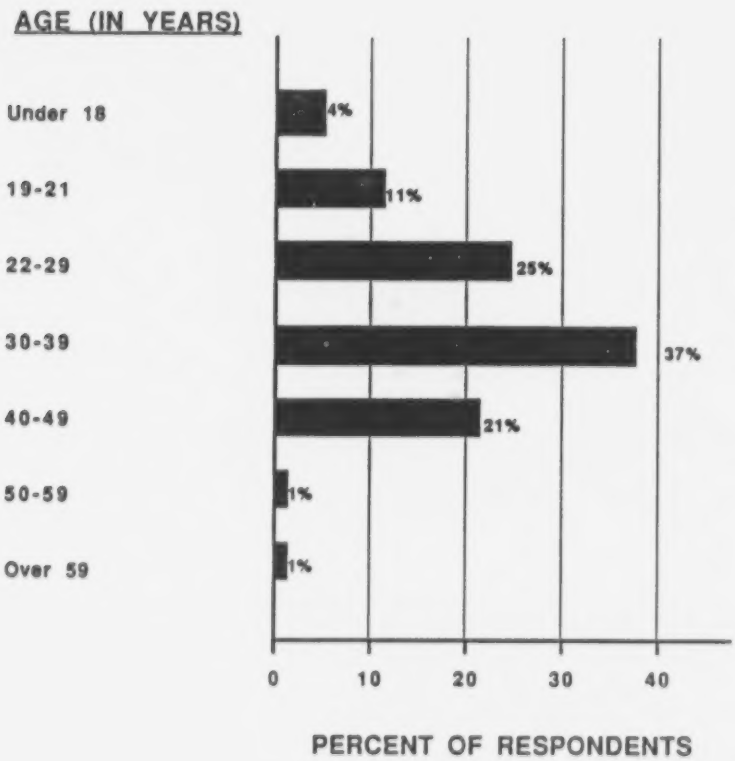


Figure 14

Age of Respondents

To determine whether the publicity for the correspondence course was attracting minorities, enrollees were requested to indicate their ethnic background. Responses (see Figure 15) indicated that almost all (98 percent) of the respondents were Caucasian. Only 1 percent were Asian, and 1 percent indicated other without listing the

specific ethnic background. This is similar to the portion (1.7 percent) of minorities in the Lakeshore district (Wisconsin Population Laboratory, 1984:Table 121 of the Wisconsin Census Report--Manisheb) but considerably lower than the portion (5.5 percent) in the state of Wisconsin (United States Department of Commerce, 1983:Table P-5). This indicates that the concern that publicity is not oriented toward minorities is realistic, and potential efforts in this regard should be pursued.

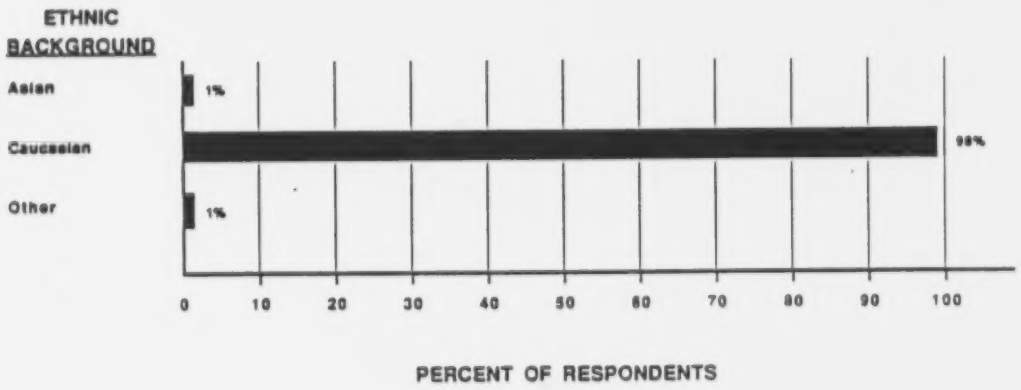


Figure 15

Ethnic Background of Respondents

One intended outcome of this study was the development of an enrollee profile. To some extent, this profile emerged; but the diversity of enrollee characteristics resulted in a limited value for such a profile. The student that is likely to be enrolled in the correspondence course, Medical Terminology, is likely to have the following characteristics (based on 50 percent or more of respondents indicating these characteristics):

1. A Wisconsin resident outside the LTI District.

2. Female.

3. Enrolled primarily to satisfy a degree/diploma requirement.

4. Enrolled because it did not conflict with work schedule, involved no travel to class, and was interested in content.

5. Enrolled because the individual preferred to rely on books and references to help in understanding difficult portions of the course.

6. Enrolled because of a preference to study alone.

7. Employed at least part time.

8. Enrolled at least part time, probably in vocational-technical courses.

9. Enrolled in a previous course within the last five years.

10. Enrolled in no previous correspondence course.

11. Between twenty-two and forty-nine years old.

12. Caucasian.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made as a result of this study:

1. The correspondence study course, Medical Terminology, should continue to be offered to meet the educational mission; i.e., preparation for job entry and continuing training of the Wisconsin VTAE System and the UW-Extension Division.

2. The correspondence study course, Medical Terminology, should continue to be offered as an alternative delivery mode, even where the traditional delivery mode course is available, to ensure access to the content even though schedule and other personal reasons prevent participation in the course.

3. The course developers should continue to pay particular attention to the lesson format, sequence of materials, completeness, and wording of directions for the course and for each lesson. Early instructor contact should be built in because of the large portion of first-time correspondence study course enrollees. Many of these would also benefit from the instructor-initiated contact because of the time elapsed since prior formal schooling as indicated by age distributions and years since enrolled in the last course.

4. The course materials should be developed at a level for ease of use by persons having received a high school diploma or its equivalent.

5. The content and number of audiotapes provided to supplement the written course materials should remain the same as presently included.

6. Additional efforts should be made to make secondary school counselors aware of the course for use by students interested in pursuing a postsecondary health education program.

7. Additional efforts should be made to promote the availability of the course to minorities in an attempt to increase minority enrollments.

8. The UW-Extension staff should request and review enrollee feedback regarding concerns to produce course materials and procedures and instructor contact to foster ease of learning and a good course reputation for increasing enrollments as a result of promotion by word of mouth.

9. The UW-Extension staff should pilot increased promotion of the course directed to places of employment; e.g., clinics, hospitals, insurance companies, etc., where completion of a medical terminology course would enable a person to transfer to a job requiring the terminology or be able to perform more effectively at a present job. The increased promotion would then be monitored to determine its effectiveness in increasing enrollments and better meeting the stated mission.

10. The LTI and UW-Extension should staff continue to study the personal and study characteristics of enrollees in the correspondence course to determine the extent to which increased efforts in course promotion and course quality result in increased enrollees and enrollee satisfaction.

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APPENDIX A

WISCONSIN VTAE MISSION

NOTE: Chapter 38 is from the 1975 Wisconsin Statutes as affected by chapters 29, 273, 300 and 418, laws of 1977. This copy is subject to change prior to publication in the 1977 statutes.

CHAPTER 38

VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

38.001 Mission.
38.01 Definitions.
38.02 Establishment.
38.04 Board of vocational, technical and adult education; powers and duties.
38.06 District boundaries.
38.08 Composition and organization of district board.
38.10 Appointment of district board members.
38.12 District board duties.
38.14 District board powers.
38.16 District tax levy.
38.18 Contracts and bidding.
38.20 Adjustment of assets and liabilities.
38.22 Admission requirements.
38.24 Fees and tuition.
38.28 State aid.
38.29 District budget limitations.
38.30 Special aid for veterans.
38.31 Educational approval board.

38.001 Mission. The board shall be responsible for the initiation, development, maintenance and supervision of programs with specific occupational orientations below the baccalaureate level, including terminal associate degrees, training of apprentices and adult education below the professional level.

History: 1971 c. 100, 125, 211.

38.01 Definitions. In this chapter:

(1) "Board" means the board of vocational, technical and adult education.

(2) "District" means a vocational, technical and adult education district established under this chapter.

(3) "District board" means the district board in charge of the vocational, technical and adult education schools of a district.

(4) "School district" means a school district operating high school grades.

(5) "School board" means the school board in charge of the public schools of a school district.

(6) "School year" means the time commencing with July 1 and ending with the next succeeding June 30.

(7) "Associate degree program" means a 2-year, post-high school program in an area designated and approved by the board for which the course requirements are established by the board.

(8) "Collegiate transfer program" means a state-wide, full-time program, designated and approved by the board, in which the credits earned may be transferable to a 4-year institution of higher education.

(9) "Vocational diploma program" means a one- or 2-year, full-time program in an area designated and approved by the board for which the course requirements are established by the board.

(10) "Vocational-adult program" means a part-time vocationally oriented program established by a district board which is approved by the state director under procedures established by the board.

History: 1971 c. 154, 211; 1975 c. 39.

38.02 Establishment. There is established under this chapter a system of vocational, technical and adult education to foster and maintain instruction in courses approved by the board in part-time and full-time day or evening classes. Every person at least the age specified in s. 118.15 (1) (b) who can profit thereby is eligible to receive instruction under this chapter and rules established by the board.

History: 1971 c. 154.

38.04 Board of vocational, technical and adult education; powers and duties. (1) GENERAL. The board shall determine the organization, plans, scope and development of vocational, technical and adult education. For state aid, credit determination and other purposes, the board shall establish criteria for the establishment of district schools and shall classify and name the district schools.

(2) DIRECTOR. The board shall appoint a director, outside the classified service, to serve at its pleasure.

(3) STAFF. The board shall appoint such staff as is necessary under the classified service. Three positions in addition to the director shall be filled outside the classified service.

(4) TEACHER AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS. (a) The qualifications of educational personnel and the courses of study for each program offered in district schools shall be approved by the

APPENDIX B

LAKESHORE VTAE DISTRICT

Lakeshore VTAE District

Manitowoc County less the portion of the Chilton, Brillion, and Denmark school districts; Sheboygan County less the portion of the New Holstein school district; plus the portion of the Kiel school district in Calumet County and Cedar Grove and Random Lake school districts in Ozaukee County.

APPENDIX C

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Ms. Alfreda
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Ms. Karen
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Janesville, WI 53545

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Oshkosh, WI 54901

APPENDIX D

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE SURVEY
University of Wisconsin and Lakeshore Technical Institute
September 1986

Directions: Please check the choice(s) that best agree(s) with your feelings about the questions.

1. What was your main purpose for enrolling in the course?

1. _____ Needed for degree or diploma
2. _____ Needed for certification
3. _____ Career advancement; not for degree or diploma
4. _____ Perform present duties better/easier
5. _____ Required to keep present job
6. _____ Other; please specify _____

2-9. What factors were important in your decision to enroll in a correspondence course? (Check all that apply.)

2. _____ No conflict with work schedule
3. _____ No conflict with leisure activities schedule
4. _____ Interested in content
5. _____ Preferred study at home or work instead of school
6. _____ No travel to class
7. _____ Course not available at campus near my home
8. _____ No need for baby-sitter
9. _____ Other; please specify _____

10-13. Rate the following in importance in helping you to understand the difficult parts of the course (1 for most important to 4 for least important).

10. _____ Books and references
11. _____ Family and friends
12. _____ Other students
13. _____ Teacher

14. How valuable did you feel the audiotape was in learning the medical terms?

1. _____ No importance
2. _____ Somewhat important
3. _____ Very important
4. _____ Essential

15. How did you feel about the number of audio lessons included?

1. _____ Far too many
2. _____ Too many
3. _____ About right number
4. _____ Too few
5. _____ Far too few

16. Which best describes your study habits?

1. _____ I prefer to study with other students
2. _____ I prefer to study by myself

17. What was your employment status while completing the course?

1. _____ Not employed
2. _____ Employed 20 hours or less per week
3. _____ Employed 21 to 39 hours per week
4. _____ Employed 40 or more hours per week

18. What was your school status while completing the course?

1. _____ Not enrolled in any other course
2. _____ Enrolled as a part-time vocational-technical school student
3. _____ Enrolled as a full-time vocational-technical school student
4. _____ Enrolled as a part-time college student
5. _____ Enrolled as a full-time college student

19. How did you learn of the course?

1. _____ Received brochure/bulletin from university
2. _____ Suggested by teacher or counselor
3. _____ Suggested by someone at my place of employment
4. _____ Suggested by a friend
5. _____ Other; please specify _____

20. What was your highest level of education before you enrolled in the correspondence course?

1. _____ Less than high school graduate
2. _____ High school graduate
3. _____ Some school after high school
4. _____ Vocational diploma or degree
5. _____ Bachelor's degree
6. _____ Beyond bachelor's degree

21. How many years were there between when you last attended school and you began the correspondence course?

1. _____ Less than 1 year
2. _____ 1 to 5 years
3. _____ 6 to 10 years
4. _____ 11 to 20 years
5. _____ More than 20 years

22. How many other correspondence courses have you taken (not necessarily completed)?

1. _____ None
2. _____ One
3. _____ Two
4. _____ Three
5. _____ Four or more

23. How old were you when you began the course?

1. _____ Under 18 years old
2. _____ 19 to 21 years old
3. _____ 22 to 29 years old
4. _____ 30 to 39 years old
5. _____ 40 to 49 years old
6. _____ 50 to 59 years old
7. _____ Over 59 years old

24. What is your ethnic background?

1. _____ Asian
2. _____ Black
3. _____ Hispanic
4. _____ Caucasian
5. _____ Middle Eastern
6. _____ Other; please specify _____

25. What is your sex?

1. _____ Female
2. _____ Male

Thank you for your help in making our course better. Please return this survey in the envelope provided.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

SAMPLE

1986

Dear ----------:

Lakeshore Technical Institute and the University of Wisconsin need your help. You enrolled in the correspondence course Medical Terminology, which is a relatively new course in our catalog. We are interested in finding out the types of students who are enrolling in the course and why they are taking it so we might serve others like you even better.

The information you give us on the enclosed questionnaire will help us greatly in deciding changes to be made that will make the course even more effective. Please complete the questionnaire by choosing the answers that most nearly match your feelings about the items. It would be appreciated if you could return the completed questionnaire to me in the enclosed envelope by Monday, October --------.

Thank you in advance for taking some of your valuable time to help us develop a better course and thereby help others like yourself. If you have any questions, please contact me at (414) 458-4183, extension 135.

Sincerely,

Marvin A. Schrader
Curriculum Specialist

MAS:jmb

Enclosures (2): Questionnaire
Return Envelope

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP CARD

WE'RE STILL LOOKING FOR IT

WHAT? MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY SURVEY

WHY? WE NEED YOUR INPUT TO HELP US IN MAKING CHANGES.

10-23-86

THANKS FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY.

APPENDIX G

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO SURVEY INSTRUMENT

CALCULATION/TABULATION SUMMARY FOR
MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE SURVEY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN AND LAKESHORE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
SEPTEMBER 1986

Number of Respondents 73

1. What was your main purpose for enrolling in the course?

		Number*	Percent
1.	Needed for degree or diploma	40	47
2.	Needed for certification	2	2
3.	Career advancement; not for degree or diploma	21	25
4.	Perform present duties better/easier	14	17
5.	Required to keep present job	2	2
6.	Other; please specify _____	6	7
		85	100

-Injury, to be reinstated after recovery in new position
-Pick up background for Medical Secretary program instructor
-Better understanding
-Get a job
-Change in job
-Extra credits; elective credits
-Get a better paying job

*Some respondents indicated miore than one purpose.

2-9. What factors were important in your decision to enroll in a correspondence course? (Check all that apply.)

		Number	Percent
2.	No conflict with work schedule	47	21
3.	No conflict with leisure activities schedule	17	8
4.	Interest in content	37	16
5.	Preferred study at home or work instead of school	35	16
6.	No travel to class	41	18
7.	Course not available at campus near my home	18	8
8.	No need for babysitter	16	7
9.	Other; please specify _____	14	6
		225	100

-Injury
-In prison
-Didn't conflict with other classes
-Care for invalid spouse; fill empty hours
-Needed credits fast
-Set my own hours
-No conflict with schedule (2)
-Satisfied elective credits fast and easy
-Credits for high school diploma because of illness
-Needed course could do in evenings or weekends; had a full-time job
-Pregnant
-Cancelled regular course
-No other course available near home in summer
-Completed over summer

10-13. Rate the importance of each of the following in helping you to understand the difficult parts of the course (1 for most important to 4 for least important).

	Sum	Average
10. Books and references	77	1.14
11. Family and friends	208	3.37
12. Other students	188	3.08
13. Teacher	158	2.59

14. How important did you feel the audiotape was in learning the medical terms?

	Number	Percent
1. Not important	27	37
2. Somewhat important	25	34
3. Very important	13	18
4. Essential	8	11
	73	100

Comments:

Didn't use. (6)

15. How did you feel about the number of audio lessons included?

	Number	Percent
1. Far too many	19	26
2. Too many	11	15
3. About right number	22	30
4. Too few	11	15
5. Far too few	10	14
	73	100

Comments:

Didn't use. (6)

16. Which best describes your study preference?

	Number	Percent
1. I prefer to study with other students	11	15
2. I prefer to study by myself	60	85
	71	100

17. How many hours per week were you employed while enrolled in the course?

	Number	Percent
1. Not employed	20	27
2. Employed 20 or fewer hours per week	12	17
3. Employed 21 to 34 hours per week	13	18
4. Employed 35 to 40 hours per week	17	23
5. Employed 41 or more hours	11	15
	73	100

18. What was your school status while enrolled in the course?

	Number	Percent
1. Not enrolled in any other course	32	44
2. Enrolled as a part-time vocational-technical school student	22	31
3. Enrolled as a full-time vocational-technical school student	14	19
4. Enrolled as a part-time college student	4	6
5. Enrolled as a full-time college student	0	0
	72	100

Comments:

Full-time high school student.
Part-time work on master's degree.

19. How did you learn of the course?

	Number*	Percent
1. Suggested by high school teacher or counselor	5	6
2. Received brochure/bulletin from technical school or university	33	42
3. Suggested by someone at my place of employment	7	9
4. Suggested by a friend	18	23
5. Other; please specify _____	16	20
	79	100

-Vocational rehabilitation counselor
-Vocational-technical instructor (3)
-Through UW brochure on my own
-Husband went to UW
-Don't remember
-Inquired at college
-Individual
-In newspaper
-Another student
-Friend who was former student
-UW independent study catalog
-Instructor suggested as substitute for cancelled class
-LTI counselor (2)

*Some respondents indicated more than one response.

20. What was your highest level of education before you enrolled in the correspondence course?

	Number	Percent
1. Less than high school graduate	5	7
2. High school graduate	4	6
3. Some school after high school	32	44
4. Vocational diploma or associate degree	26	36
5. Bachelor's degree	3	4
6. Beyond bachelor's degree	2	3
	72	100

21. How many years were there between when you last attended school and you began the correspondence course?

	Number	Percent
1. Less than 1 year	29	40
2. 1 to 5 years	19	26
3. 6 to 10 years	7	10
4. 11 to 20 years	10	14
5. More than 20 years	7	10
	72	100

22. How many other correspondence courses have you taken (not necessarily completed)?

	Number	Percent
1. None	50	68
2. One	16	22
3. Two	2	3
4. Three	0	0
5. Four or more	5	7
	73	100

23. How old were you when you began the course?

	Number	Percent
1. Under 18 years old	3	4
2. 19 to 21 years old	8	11
3. 22 to 29 years old	18	25
4. 30 to 39 years old	27	37
5. 40 to 49 years old	15	21
6. 50 to 59 years old	1	1
7. Over 59 years old	1	1
	73	100

24. What is your ethnic background?

	Number	Percent
1. Asian	0	0
2. Black	1	1
3. Hispanic	0	0
4. Caucasian	71	98
5. Middle Eastern	0	0
6. Other; please specify _____	1	1
	73	100

Comments:

Didn't specify.

25. What is your sex?

	Number	Percent
1. Female	69	95
2. Male	4	5
	73	100

General Comments

Needed more terms than were included for the job.

Difficult to study by oneself; too many written assignments.

Exempted from Medical Assistant terminology course in college because of completing course; excellent course.

Text easy to understand.

Didn't complete because book was difficult to understand.

Didn't complete because couldn't understand first unit.

Haven't started after ten months because can't understand first unit and what to do.

UW didn't have test sites; LTI office complained because they had to monitor test takers; why do students have to have the hassle (person was 40 to 49).

ERIC Clearinghouse for
Junior Colleges